Town Improvement Committees.

15. The Town Improvement Committees on the whole did well during the year. They are slowly learning the art of raising local taxation for local purposes. A sum of Rs. 18,137 was raised in this way, which, added to opening balance of Rs. 8,902 and the Government grant of Rs. 46,644, made total of Rs. 73,683. The Committees spent Rs. 55,842, and the balance to th credit at the end of the year was Rs. 17,841. Rules have been drafted for throwi open a certain number of the non-official seats on the Committees to election the rate-payers. His Highness' Government hope to issue the Rules soon.

Medical Relief.

16. The Medical Department continued to do good work. 21 hospitals a 23 dispensaries were maintained during the year, inclusive of the new dispensa at Oodumbanshola, and exclusive of the Lunatic and Leper Asylums; and in add tion, 13 Medical Institutions received grants-in-aid. Since the close of the ye five new dispensaries have been opened, *viz.*, at Ettumanur, Kothamangalom, Ado Chengannoor and Kayancolam. A new hospital has been sanctioned for Kumili, b it has not yet been opened. The Government maintained during the year Vaidyasalas. Increased grants were given to some of the Vaidyans and a redistri bution of the Vaidyasalas was also effected.

Education.

17. 'Education' received considerable attention at the hands of the Government during the year. The main features in the administration of the Education Department were the introduction of the Education Code, the abolition of fees in the Lower Grade Elementary Schools maintained by the Department, the institution of the School Leaving Certificate Scheme, both for the Secondary and Elementary Courses, the Revision of the Courses of Instruction for both classes of schools, the issue of an Inspection Code, the sanction accorded to the organisation of a Teachers' College at Trivandrum, and the arrangements made for the publica tion of a new and improved set of Malayalam Readers for use in schools. There was a substantial increase in the *volume* of education. The total number of schoo rose from 3,448 to 3,706, and their strength from 2,06,017 to 2,17,674. T increase—especially in the strength—was mainly in the Sirkar Schools, due to th opening of several new schools, both for boys and girls. The percentage of scholar in the Sirkar Schools rose from 23 to 31, the percentages in the Private Aided an the Private Unaided Schools being 38 and 31 respectively. The expenditure o Education amounted to Rs. 7,60,364. 9% of the expenditure was on Direction and Inspection, 11% on Collegiate Education, 18% on Secondary Education, 51% on Elementary Education, and 11% on Special Education and Miscellaneous. The per centage of expenditure on Elementary (or Vernacular) Education rose from 47 to 51.

18. His Highness' Government are aware that apprehension is being felt in some quarters in regard to the future of Education and a great deal of criticism has also appeared on the subject; but so far, the criticisms have not been particularly

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illuminating. The Government have been following the criticisms with care; and I would here deal with two matters in regard to which some explanation by me may be of use. Firstly, there seems to be an impression that the policy of the Education Code is directed against Aided Education generally, and that, if the Code is continued as it now stands, most Aided Schools will cease to exist. Secondly, there seems to be an impression that Vernacular Education has suffered in consequence of the reorganisation introduced by the Code. In regard to the question of Aided Education, it is not quite clear what provision in the Code is considered as being particularly aimed against the Aided Schools. It is true that, in several directions, the Code aims at improving the character of Education *generally*, but the increased stringency is intended solely in the interests of Education, and the Government are sanguine that it will be found, after a time, that the Aided Schools have benefited materially from the pressure put upon them to work up to a higher level, and also from the protection afforded to them against the springing-up of adventure schools, which have, in the past, while not possessing any permanency themselves, succeeded in damaging existing schools. In regard to Vernacular Education, the impression that it has suffered may be due to two causes, namely, the reduction of the number of classes in the Vernacular Schools, otherwise called Elementary Schools, from eight to seven, and the abolition of the Vernacular Higher Examination. Before the introduction of the Code, the Vernacular Schools were of three Grades, *viz.*, Primary, Middle and High. The Primary Schools taught up to Class IV; the Middle Schools up to Class VI; and the High Schools up to Class VIII. According to the present classification, these schools are divided into two Grades, Lower and Higher. The Lower Grade Schools teach up to Class IV and the Higher Grade Schools teach up to Class VII. It had been found, from experience, that the 8 years' course was too long in many cases and the Government therefore reduced it to a 7 years' course. This was all the change that was made. The attendance in Class VIII of the old schools was only nominal, *e. g.*, there were, at the close of 1084, only 146 pupils studying in Class VIII, out of a total of 1,86,523 pupils in all the Vernacular Schools. The large majority of the pupils used to leave off at what was then known as the Middle School stage, *i. e.*, after completing 6 years. The Government not only considered that the period of eight years' course in the Vernacular Schools was somewhat too long, but they also considered that the education given in that period could without difficulty be imparted in seven years. Hence it was that Class VIII was abolished, and the new curriculam was introduced, extending over seven years, and including practically all the instruction which had previously been spread over eight years. The Government also laid down that the seven years' course in the Vernacular Schools should be the *minimum* for the School Leaving Certificate. The result of these measures, as gauged from the past one year's working, has been that a very large number of pupils, who would otherwise have left school after having passed through Class VI, have continued their education in Class VII. At the close of 1084, there were only 218 pupils studying in the classes above Class VI, while at the close of 1085 there were so many as 2,141 such pupils. The introduction of the Education Code has so far tended to *increase* the number of pupils staying in the Vernacular Schools beyond the sixth year. There has also been an appreciable increase in the *total* numbers seeking Vernacular Education. The strength of the Elementary Schools rose from 1,86,423 in 1084 to 2,03,228 in 1085. In regard to the abolition

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of the Vernacular Higher Examination, it was part of a general scheme, which the Government thought necessary to introduce, in view to ensure that deserving pupils should obtain qualifying certificates, based on a sound basis. The scheme of School Leaving Certificates replaces not only the Vernacular Higher Examination, but also the Matriculation Examination. I trust that these remarks of mine will not be taken by the Members, who have notified their intention to speak about the Education system, as indicating that I deprecate the full and free expression by them of their opinions in regard to this important matter. On the other hand, I look forward to what they would say with considerable interest. I am sanguine that they would make their representations in that spirit of moderation, which contributes so materially to the satisfactory settlement of difficult questions, and above all, I hope that they would distinguish between the principles of the Code and individual cases of real or supposed hardship in its operation.

Religious and Charitable Institutions.

19. At the previous Sessions of the Assembly, several Members have referred to the administration of the Religious and Charitable Institutions of the State. The desire was expressed that the changes contemplated in regard to the 'Devaswoms' should not act prejudicially to those Institutions. Several Members also prayed that the expenditure on 'Charities' should be curtailed and kept within proper control. I would now invite the attention of the Members to Chapter VIII of the Report, from which they will see that final orders have not yet been passed by His Highness' Government on the proposals made by Mr. Ramachandra Rao in regard to the 'Devaswoms'. The Members may rest assured that the Government would take steps not only to put the 'Devaswoms' on an efficient footing, but also to safeguard their future. The changes introduced in the administration of the 'Charities' have already resulted in reducing the expenditure on them substantially, the total expenditure having fallen from Rs. 6,44,928 to Rs. 4,95,375, and a still further reduction of the expenditure is anticipated during 1086.

Conclusion.

20. The year 1085 was the 25th year of His Highness the Maha Raja's Reign. Immediately after the close of the year, on the 3rd Chingam 1086, people of all classes and creeds celebrated with great rejoicing, all over the State, the happy completion of 25 years of the beneficent sway of a wise and singularly unselfish Ruler, whose one and only aim has throughout been to promote the well-being of his subjects.

The Dewan having resumed his seat, the Malayalam translation of the Address was read to the Assembly by the Government Head Translator. Copies of the Address, in English and Malayalam, were then distributed among the Members and others present. The Assembly adjourned at 1-20 P. M., to meet again the next day at 11 A. M.

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